



Public Comments from Nov. 9, 2004 Community Forum

At the Community Forum last Thursday, in addition to spoken comments and questions gathered by note takers, we received seven of the blue "We Want to Hear From You" forms. They begin on page 5. We also received three of the CTIP comment sheets. Those comments are reproduced on page 6.

Summary of Community Forum Comments

I. Northgate Mall Redevelopment – Public Forum Comments

(Note taker: Roque Deherrera)

Record of Public Comment on Northgate Mall Redevelopment

Comment by Rose Morgan: Has owned 3 homes in the Northgate area over the past 25 years. She is concerned that plans for re-development are taking so long in Northgate. University Village is so successful, as an example. She is concerned that Northgate has nothing to show for all of its hard work. Why are redevelopment plans for Northgate taking so long to be real?

Ron LaFayette responds: Answered by saying that's part of why the Stakeholder Group was formed.

Comment by Rose Morgan: How many stores are planned for the Northgate Mall expansion?

Gary Weber of Simon Properties responds: 10-15 potential new stores, depending on size requirements of those businesses who actually lease space.

Comment by Rich Ellison: Why is the City proposing to cut a natural drainage system from the new library?

Alex Harris of Library responds: Remember that there will be an overall improvement in drainage performance on the site... The City expects to significantly improve drainage.

Comment by Rich Ellison: Are new street trees going to be maintained? The City is cutting its funding for arborists and tree trimming.

Comment by Jim Zweigle: Jim is concerned about plans for the 5th Avenue NE entrance to the mall. He says that it should be more pedestrian-friendly.

Gary Weber of Simon Properties responds: He reinforced the pedestrian improvements that are being made along 5th Avenue NE.

Comment by Louise McDonald: With regard to light rail, how will the pedestrian access along 1st Avenue hook up with the light rail station?

Tom Jones of KPFF Engineers responds: Simon says that they have made their best effort to plan for light rail. However, the light rail project is on a much longer time schedule than the mall expansion – light rail is being planned for 2013. Louis then asked that the stakeholders to more work on the subject.

Comment by Don Martin: Don has seen many people crossing Northgate Way from the Bank of America to the Best Buy. Why isn't there a formal connection at that location?

Julie Mercer Matlick of SDOT responds: This concern has been raised many times to the stakeholders and they will continue to consider it during the CTIP process.

Comment by Rose Morgan: Regarding the artist in residence, how can the City afford an arts plan, artist in residence, etc. when we can't afford the library (natural drainage system)?

Marcia Iwasaki of Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs responds: The arts plan comes out of the City's one percent for art – the money already set aside in the City budget. This includes funding for Benson Shaw, the artist in residence.

Comment by Janet Way: Janet is concerned with the drainage issue for the new library. She appreciates all that is happening during the entire stakeholder process. How can the City and Northgate residents expect Simon Properties to spend money on a natural drainage system when the City won't "hold the line" with the new library? No offence to art or the artist, but if the City can justify spending for the art, it should be able to justify spending on the natural drainage

system/rain garden concept. Janet said, half-joking, that that the City should have an artist design the drainage system.

Comment by Phil Varner: What is the difference between a natural drainage system and an unnatural drainage system?

Miranda Maupin of SPU responds: Miranda provided a very detailed response. To summarize, the City hopes that the natural drainage system for the mall will be less costly than a traditional system.

Comment by Jan Brucker: Jan asked the audience to demonstrate, by raising their hands, what issues were most important to them. She cited drainage issues, traffic issues and pedestrian issues. By far, the most hands were raised when Jan said drainage issues. The note taker could not get accurate counts of those who raised their hands.

Comment by Sheila Yocum: All of the Northgate residents are located to the north, south and east of the mall. Why is all of the development and Simon emphasis on the freeway and the west side of the mall?

Tom Jones of KPFF responds: The Western side of the mall has the most demand for new space. There are no current plans for the east side of the mall – grade difference there make development difficult. Overall, the focus of Simon is the west side of the mall – a business decision.

Jackie Kirn of OPM responds: Jackie pointed out that the library, community center and improved 5th Avenue entrance will help the east side of the mall. In addition, there is one retail site to the east of the mall. Overall, there are positive changes happening on the east side of the mall.

Comment by Michelle Rupp: Wanted to give a more realistic view of how the proposed projects will improve the situation east of the mall. She said the changes will make 5th Avenue “better.” However, she pointed out that the changes would not be “dramatic.”

Comment by Ken Meyer: More stores in the mall are designed to increase patronage, which actually means increased traffic. “Are we trying to fit 10 pounds into a five pound bag?”

Ron LaFayette responds: Some answers to this concern would be pointed out in the following presentation.

Comment by Dorene Cornwell: Maureen lives west of Northgate Way. She would like to see an expanded look at pedestrian access, not just on the west side of the mall. She is not persuaded that pedestrian connections will work for people coming from the transit center.

Ron LaFayette responds: Ron talked about the existence of the pedestrian committee. Ron pointed out that tonight's presentation is only a small piece of the work being done.

II. Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan – Public Forum Comments (Note taker: Scott Dvorak)

Record of Public Comment on Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan

Comment by Gloria Butts: Thanked the stakeholders and staff for their work. She mentioned that she thought the stakeholders meetings are too long. She noted the area's traffic problems and that since the police department enduring some cutbacks there is a lack of traffic rule enforcement. She supports the idea of adding parking on Fifth Avenue which could act as a traffic calming measure and slow traffic down. Sidewalks in the area (lack of them) are a problem - but one that has been around for 50 years.

Comment by Chuck Dolan: Mr. Dolan encourages the CTIP to look at the issue of cut-through traffic in the surrounding neighborhood. 98th Street is a de facto arterial - it's not designated as one, but it is used as one. There are other streets that have the same problem. Studies often seem to imply that traffic disappears on these streets, since they aren't even included in the study. The CTIP needs to be comprehensive and this problem needs to be addressed - especially since redevelopment of Northgate Mall is going to increase traffic in the area.

Comment by Chad Lupkes: Mr. Lupkes heard dates like 2010 and 2015 used when talking about looking at the future of Northgate. He encourages everyone to look at 2050. He appreciates the limitation on finances now, but what about the future. Funds will always not be so limited, and plans need to be put in place now. He would like to see a comprehensive development plan in place identifying when things would be happening and what sorts of improvement are being made over time as money becomes available.

Jackie Kirn of OPM responds: There is a vision for Northgate developed in the Northgate Comprehensive Plan. All of the topics being considered by the stakeholder group is addressed in the comprehensive plan. We are starting to see some progress on these items with recent development

proposals and some resources becoming available. Funding will always be an issue - some reasons include initiatives that limit ability to raise revenues as well as the overall economy. The long-term process, however, is guided by the vision of the comprehensive plan.

III. Written Comments

All seven respondents indicated, by checking a “yes” box, that they found the meeting informative.

Four respondents indicated that they felt their concerns were heard or recorded. Of the remaining three, one indicated “yes, partially,” one wrote “not sure,” and one wrote “N/A Could not stay for presentations, only open house.”

- (Louise McDonald): I hope Simon can be required to do the natural drainage system, rather than simply advised to explore it.
- Great way to get the public involved and receive input.
- (Estell Berteig): Simon is under the “most stringent requirements in the City.” The City property should be under the same stringent requirements and set a higher example. SPU says that “natural systems don’t have to cost more,” yet the City staff (Parks) said cost was a factor in deleting the rain garden. They also said the rain garden was too close to the building foundation and there is no room to move it west because the lawn is there. A lawn is so inappropriate to the wooded creekside nearby. The natural drainage is far more important.
- Thank you to City Council for approving the hybrid plan for daylighting Thornton Creek! If Lorig buys and develops the proposed parcel of land, will they be required to honor this plan and integrate it into their plans? Thank you to the Stakeholders Group for listening to the public.
- (Joyce Mitchell): Auto traffic flow is critical to mall expansion. Cars will continue to come to the mall – even with better pedestrian areas/ways and better public transit. People from the neighborhood that would walk to the mall will not keep the mall financially healthy. The mall is dependent on regional shoppers. I live within three blocks of the mall, occasionally walk there and am not a mall shopper as many of the people who live nearby are not mall shoppers. Safe pedestrian walkways and traffic patterns and flow are critical. Do you have numbers of people from the area you expect to frequent the mall? Do you have projected \$ figures?

- How do calls for more granular pedestrian planning relate to individual property owners/businesses? Example 1: NW Hospital Outpatient Building has no pedestrian-only route from bus stop to front door let alone to back door used for after-hours access. Example 2: The mall is east of black hole on the pedestrian-improvement maps. My typical visit to the mall starts at the Transit Center. I walk across to the mall, maybe through to Target, maybe across Northgate Way to stuff east of 5th NE. Right now those routes can be a nightmare if it's raining or if there's a lot of traffic. Personally I would really like to see more detail. I am really glad to hear pedestrian access taken seriously and maybe it's the presentation format, but I am unpersuaded that the new retail space will be more pedestrian-friendly. I asked about this just so you know. One eccentric wish: Web access as fast as possible. I enlarge them on my screen at home.
- Pedestrian access to and around the mall seems outside the scope of the Simon development and more in the lap of the City. E.g., pedestrian overpasses (over Northgate Way to the Northgate North, and maybe on 5th) and crosswalks. Perhaps show the other surrounding projects "bridge" to the mall.
- Pedestrian overpass over 103rd to Transit Center. Be sure there is ramp access for wheelchairs. Concerns about pedestrian crossing Northgate Way between 3rd and 5th. Ideal solution would be an overpass. The Northgate North entrance is right where 4th would be, making it an easy place to cheat and cross the street. Why not take advantage of the slope and the SE corner and put the multilevel parking there?

IV. CTIP Comment Sheets

From Chad Lupkes:

1. Based on what you have seen and heard tonight, what areas do you believe should be prioritized in the CTIP Planning process?

Pedestrian access, especially crossing the streets. Less emphasis on individual blocks, more multi-block coordination.

2. What are key transportation opportunities already existing in Northgate that might become part of future solutions? For example: the Northgate Transit Center.

Multilevel walkways. Plan for 50+ years because it's going to be VERY different when we run out of oil.

From Fred Utersky

1. *Based on what you have seen and heard tonight, what areas do you believe should be prioritized in the CTIP Planning process?*

New and better sidewalks along First Avenue from NE 92nd St to NE 103rd St.

From Chuck Dolan

1. *Based on what you have seen and heard tonight, what areas do you believe should be prioritized in the CTIP Planning process?*

The CTIP needs to look at traffic levels, impacts of mitigation on nearby residential streets. Specifically east-west traffic on NE 97th, 100th, and 104th between 15th Avenue NE and 5th Avenue NE. Significant traffic on NE 97th and 100th without any mitigation thus far.